

Extending High Standards Across Schools

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In this newsletter we have two bumper sections: Cluster Contributions and Useful Readings & References.

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If you would like to contribute to the EHSAS e-newsletter please e-mail extending.standards@minedu.govt.nz with any information or photographs.

Remember our website is:
www.minedu.govt.nz/qoto/extending
and the EHSAS cluster online network is:
www.virtuallearning.school.nz/ehsas

From the Project Manager

It was good to learn of so many clusters holding teacher-only days or mini-conferences in the days before the start of school. You can read about some of them in this edition of the newsletter, and maybe more write-ups will appear on the EHSAS Virtual Learning Network before too long.

This is my last newsletter, as my contract finishes in April and I will be retiring from full time work. It has been an incredible experience to work on the EHSAS project, and watch so many plans come to fruition - not always easily, it must be said, but the quality of learning and the boost to teacher confidence are a testament to the focus and energy you all put into your projects.

It is an exciting time for education, as we respond to the changed demands society is making on schools. The NZ Curriculum enables schools to adopt a flexible approach which caters for the needs of individuals, and it will be interesting to see how our timetables and teaching spaces change over the next few years.

All the very best to you for the rest of the year and beyond.

Sylvia Burch
Project Manager for EHSAS



Ngā Haeata Mātauranga profiles one of our own!



EHSAS schools keen to read the latest evidence, data and information about Māori education can get a copy of *Ngā Haeata Mātauranga – The Annual Report on Māori Education, 2007/08*.

Our own Te Kopuru School in Northland is profiled in the report's chapter on Māori language education talking about the relationship between Māori education success and talented and inspired leadership.

[Read the report online.](#) Order a hard copy by emailing ka.hikitia@minedu.govt.nz

The report was released by the Minister of Education, Anne Tolley, earlier this month. It is a key measure of the Ministry of Education's progress towards implementing *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success: The Māori Education Strategy 2008 – 2012*, launched in April 2008.

This year's report has been structured to reflect the four focus areas of *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success*. Overall, the report shows that progress was made for, and with, Māori learners in the 12-month period covered by this report, but challenges remain.



Cluster Contributions

North West Hamilton Cluster Whole Cluster Teacher Only Day – 29 January, 2009

The North West Hamilton Cluster is made up of two Kindergartens, two Primary Schools and one Intermediate. Our cluster objective is to collaboratively create effective transition for all students from pre-school to the end of Year 8 through consistently high expectations for teachers' pedagogical knowledge and student achievement.

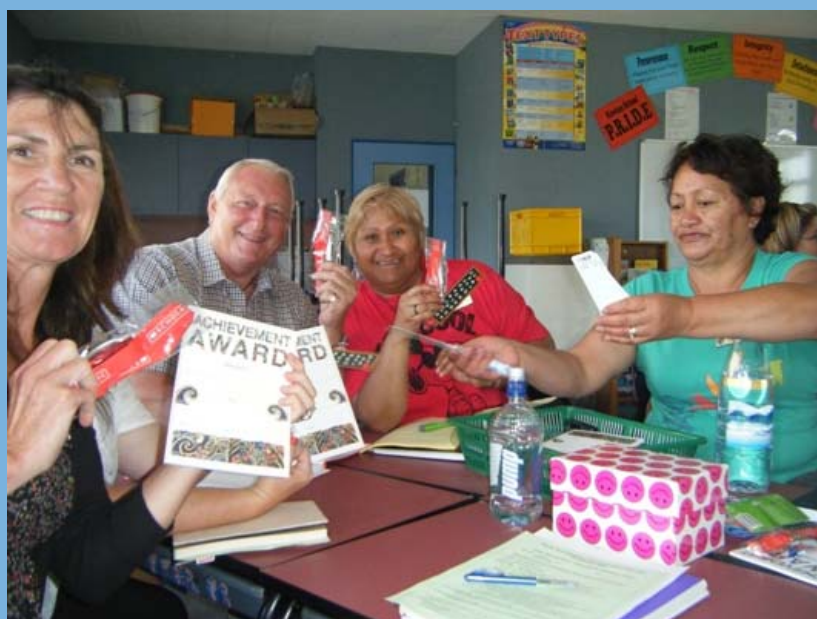
We have established an expectation that a cluster seminar day will be held before the start of each new school year. Our reading challenge for this year is to collaboratively build on the strengths which already exist in our schools and kindergartens so that we achieve rapid improvement for students who are not achieving, and continued improvement for high and average achievers. As our cluster includes learners at different achievement levels as well as both new and experienced staff, the day was planned around a keynote speaker followed by a choice of workshops. Two publishing firms also provided book displays.

Linda Bendikson, Manager for the Ministry of Education, Central North Region began the day by sharing trends and patterns in student achievement and the Ministry's vision for improved student achievement. These workshops were then provided and teachers attended two of their choice during the day:

- Kay Hancock, Senior Editor Literacy at Learning Media spoke on *'Talking, listening, learning: Teaching Oral Language'* and explored with us how we can be more effective in this challenging but critical aspect of teaching.
- Pam Thomson and Karen Purdy who have been involved in the PEN (Performance Enhancement in the North Waikato) for more than 4 years presented a practical approach to *'Raising student achievement in literacy Years 5 – 8'*.
- Diane Wana who lectures in Education at Te Whare Wananga o Awanuiarangi, Whakatane presented *'Readers' Theatre: A powerful tool for literacy Years 1 – 8'* and how it can be an integral part of a literacy programme and a second workshop on *'Drama in the classroom for literacy'* and how it can be used naturally and easily with other curriculum areas.
- Joan Gibbons who was previously a librarian at School of Education, University of Waikato, presented two workshops. One was on *Curiously Interesting Books that support the curriculum in Years 1–4'* and the other on *Using Books to Support Achievement Objectives and Key Competencies in Years 5–8'*.
- Rob Southam who is affiliated with Scholastic Publications addressed *'The Middle Years Reading Slump'*.
- Dr Sue Dymock, Senior Lecturer at the University of Waikato shared a research presentation on *'An observational and interview study of teachers who are nominated by their principals as exemplary teachers of reading'*.

The day ended with an opportunity for new teachers to meet for a short induction to our EHSAS journey so far and actions for 2009.

Feedback from across the cluster confirms it was a *'stimulating, purposeful and exciting day'*.



Continued...

Waikato Cluster Seminar Day

On the 29 January this year, our six Waikato EHSAS schools' staff took part in our third professional development day before school started. This is a great way to start the year as we could share ideas together around our two goals:

To continue implementing innovative approaches to classroom practice to allow students to engage in deeper thinking.

To develop gifted and talented programmes within each school that cater for the needs of our students.

The day was held here at Hukanui School and we started all together in the hall with an iMovie, made by a Year 4 student, on our Critical Thinking Day in Term 4 2008. He spoke before this on his thoughts about critical and creative thinking and we were all so proud of him speaking to an audience of 130 teachers.

Throughout the day the 130 teachers went to three different workshops of their choice and we had a wide range of expertise on offer for this, including university lecturers, outside specialists and practising teachers who shared their ideas on thinking and making a difference for all students.

At the conclusion of the day we met back in the hall and each EHSAS school presented a DVD on how they had developed our cluster goals in their school during 2008. It was interesting for everyone to learn what is happening in other schools. The day was a great success and teachers now have many new ideas to take back to their classes at the beginning of 2009.



A Year 4 student opening our Seminar Day



Teachers taking part in workshops during the day

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Remuera Cluster

The Remuera EHSAS Cluster held its annual Teacher Only Day on January 30th at Remuera Intermediate. The cluster is made up of 7 primary and intermediate schools and around 170 teachers attended the day.

Three workshops were run by the school principals as well as Alison Smith from School Leadership Coaching and Consultancy. The workshops were based on our objectives for 2009, which is our last year of the project.

Teachers new to their schools took part in an '**Introduction to the Remuera EHSAS Cluster**' which was a welcome to new staff members to our EHSAS cluster schools. The workshop covered the following:

- The key concepts of our cluster
- Introduction in a practical and interactive way to what is happening in our seven schools.
- The benefits of being in our EHSAS Cluster
- Walk through some of our online resources
- Observe "coaching in action"



The second workshop was an '**Introduction into Action Research**' and how to carry out a project in your school. It was lead by Alison Smith from School Leadership Coaching and Consultancy. Staff from various cluster schools shared the projects they carried out last year and the difference it has made to teaching and learning in their schools.

The final workshop was on 'Effective Pedagogy' and what teacher actions promote student learning. Teachers took part in an interactive session unpacking research by John Hattie as well discussing what is happening in our schools. They were also taken through our cluster knowledge-net site and how this can be used to keep them informed on what is happening in the different schools.

It was a great start to 2009 and we are all looking forward to another year of working closely together.

Mark Keenan
Cluster Facilitator



Wine Country Cluster



Project Manager Performance Agreement and Appraisal

In the EHSAS clusters the Project Manager plays an important role in ensuring that the cluster maintains its momentum and that the schools involved collaborate with each other to achieve the shared project goals.

In the Wine Country Cluster the Principals developed a Performance Agreement and an appraisal process so that everyone had a clear and shared understanding of the Project Manager's role.

The Principals employed an external advisor to advise them. As a result the external advisor, the Project Manager and the Wine Country Cluster Principals developed the Performance Agreement and appraisal process outlined below. The Key Performance Indicators were adapted from the Ministry of Education's Deputy Principal Performance Dimensions and the process was based on a formative practice model.

The process is in its second year and has been extremely successful. It has given an opportunity for each school to formally give feedback and commend the work of the Project Manager, and has also enabled the Project Manager to set directional goals and obtain constructive feedback about the clusters progress and next steps.

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Wine Country Project Manager Performance Agreement

Professional Leadership	Strategic Management	Relationship Management	Statutory Requirements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead some of the cluster development and source professional readings, research etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the cluster maintains the momentum of the project and is continuously working on the Action Plan objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversee the involvement of each school in the cluster development in line with the Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistently summarise assessment data from each school and then report it to the cluster and the Ministry of Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversee the involvement of each school in the cluster development in line with the Action Plan – (leading the staff) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Source and co-ordinate Professional Development in line with the cluster Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaise and link the collaboration between cluster schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and complete the annual cluster project report, action plan and forward it to each school, and the Ministry of Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build a book and reference library for the cluster 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversee the involvement of each school in the cluster development in line with the Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share the cluster project and make links with other education sectors in the local/regional area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicise the cluster project and development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognise each school's individuality and special character, maintain positive relationships with each school's lead team and respond to each school's needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicise the cluster project and development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involve parents in the project. Eg: seminars, pamphlets, newsletters and review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete cluster administration including input in expenditure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide guidance and support to each school's lead team and assist them to create and implement an annual action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host and support inter school and outside cluster school visits 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out own Professional Development that makes links with Project Goals 			

Process of Performance Appraisal

- Performance Agreement established
- Project Manager, external advisor and appointed Principal liaison meet termly to discuss the Performance Agreement
- Project Manager identifies three key focus areas from the Performance Agreement. These areas will be appraised
- Principals have a copy of the Performance Agreement and the Project Manager's identified focus areas
- An appraisal panel is appointed. This consists of four elected Principals. One is deemed the Principal liaison for the panel.
- Principals not on the panel have input into the appraisal through feedback forms that are developed and distributed by the panel
- Principals consult with their staff when compiling the feedback on behalf of their school
- Feedback is collected during term 3
- The appraisal panel meet towards the end of term 3
- The external advisor is used for consultation by the appraisal panel
- The final report is completed by the panel by the end of October
- The Principal liaison provides the Project Manager with written and oral feedback as soon as the report has been completed. A summary is then shared with the cluster and used to assist in the development of the annual review and action plan

MERGE Project – Mount Roskill Campus

Mount Roskill Campus (Primary, Intermediate and Grammar) is moving into the second year of our EHSAS project. We spent 2008 building effective links across our campus, agreeing and collating summative assessments and setting up a cross-campus Professional Learning Circle (PLC) of young teachers.

After working with teachers to review professional learning and effective pedagogy, we have this year launched Professional Learning Circles as our PD model across the campus. We believe that teachers need time to reflect on their current practice, connect with relevant data and research and creatively trial new strategies that will enable students to become better learners. These PLCs will operate within the "Teacher Inquiry Model", (BES, Timperley et al., 2007).

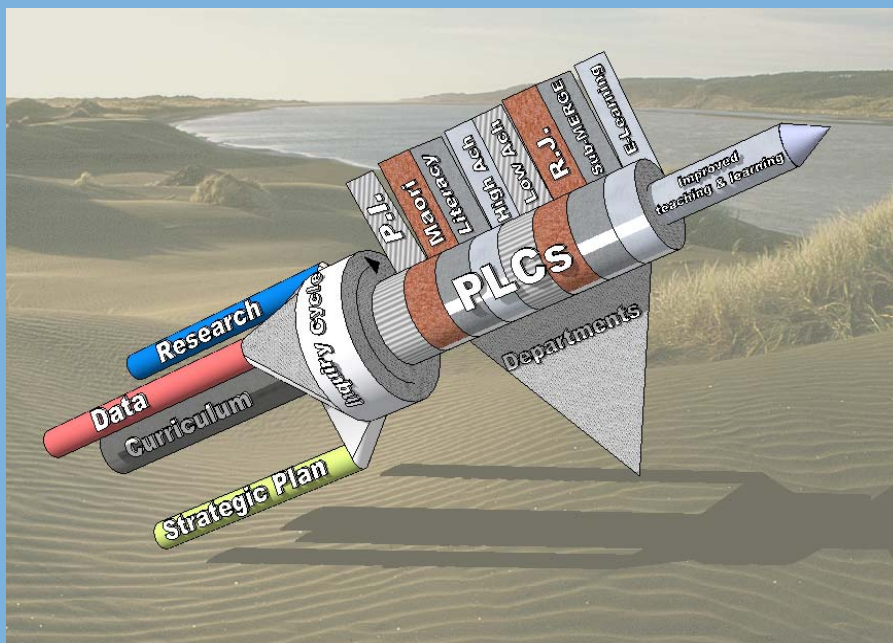
Each school has developed their own PD model, based on their key priorities to raise achievement. In addition, we have identified a range of key cross-campus groups on topics such as Pacific Island Achievement, Targeting Low Achieving Students, Maori Achievement and music. These groups have representatives from all 3 schools. As the project evolves, we plan to further develop cross-campus groups in order to extend teachers' knowledge of the Y4 to Y11 curriculum.

Mount Roskill Grammar has embarked on an ambitious professional learning journey that will support the school to achieve the goals in the strategic plan and implement the new curriculum.

Mount Roskill Grammar is a large decile 4 secondary school, with 150 teaching staff.

Teachers are working within two PLCs – one in their department, developing formative assessment and the other within a topic of interest, selected by the teachers.

The topics of interest link to the strategic plan and are based on areas for development, identified from data analysis.



Professional learning takes place on Wednesday mornings, before the timetabled day begins.

We have a dedicated and trained group of facilitators who are pivotal to the success of the programme. They meet monthly and operate as their own PLC, reviewing and developing their skills as facilitators. Fiona Grant (Head of E Learning, Team Solutions) is supporting our E Learning PLC and Alana Madgwick (Consultant), is supporting our literacy PLCs. In addition, we have allocated a teacher to support the overall implementation and organisation of the groups. Marie Cameron, supports our project as a researcher, and is tracking our journey and supporting facilitators with research projects and appropriate professional reading.

As we move into week 2 of the programme, the feedback from the facilitators and the teachers has been overwhelmingly positive. Teachers have been honest and reflective in their contributions and have already taken on professional reading and data collection tasks.

2009 Conference Cancelled

The Ministry of Education will not be running a national Extending High Standards Across Schools (EHSAS) conference in 2009.

This decision has been made in the context of the current economic climate. We have reviewed the cost-effectiveness of the ways in which EHSAS clusters are supported in their work and while we know that the national conference is valuable to schools, we feel that our support is better targeted elsewhere.

The money budgeted by clusters for the conference should be used specifically for activities linked to the objectives and targets of their projects. Action plans will need to be updated accordingly.

An e-mail advising main cluster contacts about this was sent in early February.

The EHSAS Team at the Ministry of Education would like to take this opportunity to thank those who volunteered their services to the 2009 Conference Committee.

Visiting International Speakers

It may save your cluster money to join up with other clusters in order to book or contract international speakers or PD providers...

- Visit the EHSAS Virtual Learning Network and add the details of your visiting speaker to the calendar along with your contact details
- Check the EHSAS Virtual Learning Network Calendar for entries from other clusters
- Add a notice to the EHSAS Virtual Learning Network to let others know if you are thinking of paying for someone to provide PD for your schools, then you can link up and share the costs more widely
- E-mail the [EHSAS team](#) at the Ministry of Education to let them know what you're planning and they can help with making the connections to other clusters who may be interested in sharing the costs

Useful Readings & References

The EHSAS Team sets aside time to do some professional reading and sometimes we come across articles or books that may be of interest to you. Below are our latest finds and while we can't always provide you with a copy of the actual article for copyright reasons, we can provide you with the details you need to find the article. Most articles will be available through your local library, or you can order it through the publisher online. Where possible, we have provided the internet link to the article.

Learning Leading Visits (Liz Millar)

This article describes in some detail the process for setting up a principal professional learning group where principals self select their group and visit each other's schools to take part in principal inquiry. Liz Millar (now principal at Ngaio School in Wellington) worked with a pilot group of principals to pilot the programme that was developed by the National College of School Leadership (NCSL) in England.

EHSAS clusters are encouraged to use a model of collaboration where Principals critique each other and this article provides good advice on what has been found to be useful in setting this up successfully. Liz includes examples of initial thinking required, cultural norms to be set up, planning for learning visits, and principal inquiry questions. This is an excellent article if your cluster is about to start leadership critique and may even help with setting up cross-teacher critique across your cluster schools or within schools. The article can be downloaded as a .pdf from the NZPF link below:

http://www.nzpf.ac.nz/publications/NZP_T1_2008_Part_A.pdf

In connection with this article, you may also wish to visit www.edex.net.nz where you can find some useful modules designed for leaders by Dr David Stewart.

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Transition to School: Literacy Issues between the New Entrant Classroom and Early Childhood Education (Robyne Selbie in Reading Forum N.Z. – Vol. 21, No. 2, 2006)

This article by a primary school principal asks how well are schools building on children's pre-school experiences to make transition to school a positive experience that impacts positively on literacy progression for students. Selbie discusses her own school's transition programme for new entrant students and outlines some of the practices that they have in place.

There is in depth analysis of the differences and similarities between primary and pre-school settings and discussion around the research/evidence about successful school practice in literacy.

You might not agree with everything in this article, but it is a good think piece if your cluster or school is starting to consider making genuine links with your students' early childhood educators or families in order to build teacher understanding and improve literacy levels.

Never Work Harder than your Students & other principles of great teaching is the attention-grabbing title of a new book by Robyn R. Jackson, published in January 2009 by ASCD (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development). Seven principles underpin the concept of a master teacher, and each is explained, developed and worked through. No matter what your teaching experience, there is plenty in this book to set you thinking and to stimulate you to try something different. There are practical guidelines and templates at the end of the book, and references throughout to Dr Jackson's website www.masterteachermindset.com

Practitioner Research and Enquiry in Networked Learning Communities (Colleen McLaughlin and Kristine Black Hawkins, with Andy Townsend University of Cambridge Faculty of Education for Networked Learning Communities)

An interesting write up from six case studies: "The study was designed around three key research questions: What is understood by research and enquiry? What is the impact or effect of research and enquiry on a school? What sustains the effective use of research and enquiry in schools and networks?

Within these debates certain key issues emerge:

- How to bridge the gap between various constituent groups involved in this work.
 - How to integrate and enhance the use of knowledge and research create din different settings
 - How to define the work that practitioners engage in when enquiring and researching practice
 - How to work with the multiple but overlapping purposes of professional development, reflection on practice, evidence collection and professional knowledge creation.
 - How to assess the work undertaken by practitioners.
- All of these proved to be live concerns in this study."

http://www.educ.cam.ac.uk/research/projects/nlcr_report_2004-5.doc

O le Tala ia Lita – Lita's Story: The Challenge of Reporting Achievement to Parents (Helen Timperley & Viviane Robinson

This paper reports on research into how primary and middle schools report to parents and how parents interpret that reporting. The research was conducted in Mangere and Otara, Auckland and highlights issues around teachers reporting student progress and achievement without comparing to national standards – especially when parents believe that is how the results are reported. The paper gives insight into how schools can change their reporting practices so that they are a "vehicle for engaging parents in their children's education" using real examples of how this happened in the researched schools. Lita's story refers to a story written by the researchers to convey the major findings of the research to professional and community groups. It is about a hypothetical student who received excellent reports throughout primary school only to find in high school that she was well below the national average. Issues schools face in changing their reporting practices are addressed in the article (e.g. competition between schools being a reason for reporting positively instead of reporting honestly against national averages).

[Timperley, H., & Robinson, V. \(2004\). O le Tala ia Lita – Lita's Story: The Challenge of Reporting Achievement to Parents. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, 39 \(1\), 91-112.](#)

Continued...

[Learning with Blogs and Wikis \(Bill Ferriter\)](#)

Below is a very useful link about learning with blogs and wikis. This link would be ideal for those who've never been interested in blogs or wikis because it all seems too complicated. Here is a quote from the writer, Bill Ferriter:

"With the investment of a bit of time and effort, I've found a group of writers to follow who expose me to more interesting ideas in one day than I've been exposed to in the past 10 years of costly professional development."

http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational_leadership/feb09/vol66/num05/Learning_with_Blogs_and_Wikis.aspx

Virtual Learning Network

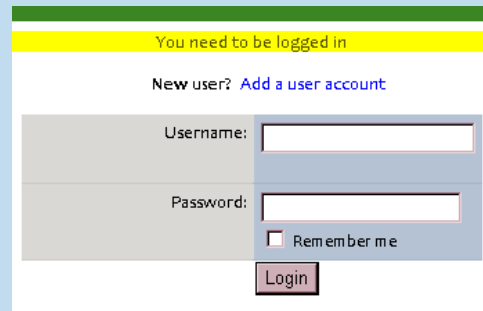
www.virtuallearning.school.nz/ehsas

The EHSAS Virtual Learning Network (VLN) has been set up for EHSAS cluster members to see what other clusters are doing and make contact with them. It's also a place where you can share what you have achieved in your cluster, and gain access to useful cluster resources.

The site is very easy to navigate and your username and password is created by you. There are now almost 170 members.

Contact extending.standards@minedu.govt.nz for first access details (a one-off PIN).

Recently added to the VLN are detailed reporting guidelines to help clusters further with their annual EHSAS reports due at the end of May.



The log in screen: If you're not already a member, simply click on "Add a user account" and create your own username and password.

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